

# Extension of Foster Care Services



# Overview

- Tennessee opted into the Federal Fostering Connections Act of 2008
- This Act allows our state to extend foster care services to age 21
- DCS has policies that allow us to extend foster care services to age 21

# Learning Objectives

This training should help you understand:

1. Why Tennessee extended foster care services to 21
2. Who is eligible for Extension Services
3. What is available under Extension Services
4. How to transition a Custodial case to Extension of Foster Care Services
5. Where to find more information & support
6. How we will measure success

# 18 is Not a Magic Number

Think about your own transition to adulthood—what age were you when you were truly “independent?”



What do you think the average age of independence is in the US?

**27**

# Parents generally continue to support their own children long past age 18

- Approximately 50% of young adults aged 18-24 lived with their parents at some point;
- About 40% of 2008 college graduates still live with their parents;
- 60% of parents provide financial support to their adult children who are no longer in school. (Forbes, 2011)

# Youth who Age Out of Foster Care

What do you think happens to many youth who age out at 18?

- Incarceration
- Homelessness
- School dropout
- Unemployment
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Uninsured
- Addiction

# Better Outcomes for Youth Who Accept Foster Care Services up to 21

- More than doubles the chances a youth will be working or in school at age 19;
- Young women who remained in care saw a 38% reduction in pregnancy before 20;
- Youth were twice as likely to have completed some post-secondary education.

# Why Implement Extension of Foster Care Services to 21?

- Engage youth as partners and resources;
- Improve graduation rates;
- Increase educational attainment;
- Decrease negative outcomes; and
- Build forever families.
- Draw down additional federal funds so we can broaden the array of services for young adults;

# Extension of Foster Care Services to 21



# Overview of Extension of Foster Care

1. Who DCS can serve (slightly expanding population)
2. What services young adults get (includes placement support, monthly case mgmt, judicial oversight)
3. How Extension of Foster Care services are funded (Federal IV-E funding)

# Who we can serve 18-21

Youth who turned 18 in Foster Care  
(not a YDC)

AND

Who meet 1 of the 3 following criteria:

# Who We Can Serve 18-21

1. Young adults completing high school or GED/HiSET.
2. Young adults who are enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education.
3. Young adults who have a serious disability that prevents them from pursuing education or full-time employment.

# What are the services under “Extension of Foster Care Services?”

## In addition to current IL Services:

- Monthly face to face with FSW
- Court oversight every 6 months
  - One Review is Annual Transition Plan Review (to demonstrate reasonable efforts to finalize the plan)
- Housing support (such as a placement agreed upon by the young adult and team OR the ILA)
- The services a youth receives will depend on what they qualify for & need

# How is this funded?

## Federal IV-E Funding:

- If a youth was IV-E eligible as a custodial youth and transitions directly to Extension of Foster Care, no additional steps are needed for IV-E.
- If a youth was not IV-E eligible as a custodial youth OR if more than 6 months passes between a youth's exit and return to DCS, DCS will need:
  - New Title IV-E Foster Care eligibility determination
  - Court order determining extension of foster care services is in the young person's best interest

# More on Available IL Services

All youth receiving Extension Services qualify for at least:

- Monthly Face to Face with FSW
- Twice-annual participation in Court or Foster Care Review Board
- Life Skills Instruction
- Wrap services (details in IL Manual)
- Additional Services will depend on a young person's situation and needs

# **1) 18-21 Completing High School/GED/HiSET**

**Young adults 18-21 completing high school or GED/HiSET may also qualify for:**

- Housing support (such as a placement agreed upon by the young adult and team OR the Independent Living Allowance)
- IL Wrap and IL Supports (graduation expenses, extracurricular activities, etc.)

## **2) 18-21 Enrolled in Post-Secondary**

**Young adults 18-21 enrolled in an approved post-secondary or vocational education program may also qualify for:**

- DCS Scholarships
- Housing support (such as a placement agreed upon by the young adult and team OR Independent Living Allowance
- **VERY LIMITED IL Wrap for youth getting ETV** (Things not associated with Federal definition of “cost of attendance”)

# 3) 18-21 “Can’t work/attend school”

**Young adults 18-21 who have a serious physical/mental health condition that prevents them from pursuing education or full-time employment may also qualify for:**

- Housing support (such as a placement agreed upon by the young adult and team OR Independent Living Allowance)
- IL Wrap and other IL supports
- Purpose is to bridge to services for adults
- Continue to follow Policies 19.7 and 19.8
- Approval and monitoring process

# 18-21 “Can’t work/attend school:” (See handout)

## 1) Youth with Intellectual Disabilities

- Youth who meet DIDD waiver criteria qualify for limited transition time period while moving to DIDD [NO CHANGES to 19.8 DIDD Transition Process]
- Youth with Borderline IQ (71-84) may qualify

## 2) Youth with Serious Mental Health Needs

- Youth who meet criteria for behavioral health supported housing qualify for limited transition time period while transitioning to supported housing
- Youth with psychological or psychiatric needs served in Level 3 or higher continuum settings may qualify
- Staff will continue to follow 19.7 to transition youth to adult behavioral services; no changes to that process

## 3) Youth with Serious Physical Health Needs

Youth who are medically indicated and have been receiving services to support their activities of daily living, who meet or are expected to meet requirements for Supplemental Security Income and are TennCare eligible, may qualify for foster care extension *only* for the purposes of completing transition to housing and community based TennCare services.

# 18-21 “Can’t work/attend school”

## **Approval Process for these young people:**

- Process should begin at 17 year old meeting
- IL Specialist must be involved in this process
- Clinical determinations will be made by the psychologist or the nurse & entered in TFACTS.
- Consideration of COE consultation or case review to clarify eligibility or to support the development of transition plans
- RA and IL Director must approve
- Cases will be reviewed Quarterly

# Youth Requirements for Extension Services

- Work towards goals on the Transition Plan
- Live by rules and laws of society
- Maintain monthly contact with Family Service Worker
- Maintain eligibility (i.e., academic eligibility)
- Work with staff and team to identify a place to live that is safe and supports completion of Transition Plan goals.
- Participate in actions to maintain/apply for health insurance

# Other IL Services for Youth 18-21

- Young people who are not eligible for DCS Extension of Foster Care Services, who don't choose services through DCS, or who need extra services and support may be eligible for services through Youth Villages' Transitional Living Program
- Youth should be referred to adult services that can help them achieve their goals (Career Centers, DHS, etc.)

# Court Review Process

- Young adults receiving Extension of Foster Care Services have their case reviewed twice per year by the Court or a Representative of the Court, such as Foster Care Review Boards
  - once to review the Transition Plan

# Eligibility for Out of State Youth 18-21

- Young adults who aged out in another state will be eligible for limited services only in TN (such as Transitional Living)
- Young adults who aged out in Tennessee and move to another state will not be eligible for TN Extension of Foster Care Services. They may still be eligible for ETV. It is the responsibility of the receiving state to provide services.



**The Role of IL**

# IL Program Specialist Role

1. TFACTS responsibilities
  - IL staff create, approve and end IL Eligibility Records for Extension of Foster Care
2. IL Specialists partner with Child Welfare Benefits Counselors on young adult IV-E eligibility

Note: FSW responsible for calling CFTMs, partnering with legal to file motions and obtain orders for IV-E, and for filing IV-E and all other Extension paperwork in the case file

# What does success look like?



# Measures of Success

- Percentage of youth who age out accept Extension of Foster Care Services
- Transitional Surveys completed on time
- Life Skills Assessments are completed on time
- Number of youth achieving educational goals
- Achievement of permanency for older youth
- Quality of IL and Transition Planning and Casework as evidenced by File Reviews

# Tools and Resources



# IL Resources

- **IL Program Specialists**
- DCS Policy 16.51-16.53
- IL and Transition Planning Guide
- Identifying and Accessing IL Services Manual
- (3) IL and Transition Planning Guides
- IL Tipsheets
- IL Section of DCS Website

# Policies: 16.51-16.53

- 16.51: Independent Living & Transition Planning
- 16.52: Extension or Re-establishment of Foster Care for Young Adults
- 16.53: Eligibility for Independent Living Services

# Key IL Forms

- [CS-0488, Rights and Responsibilities to Receive Foster Care Services as an Adult](#)
- [CS-0968, Voluntary Placement Agreement](#)
- [CS-0953, Application for Title IV-E Eligibility for Young Adults Requesting Extension or Re-establishment of Foster Care Services](#)
- [CS-0759, Refusal of Extension of Foster Care Notification- Youth Leaving Custody](#)
- [CS-0778, Application for Re-Establishment of Foster Care Services](#)

# “Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide”

IL Guide: a set of protocols to guide

- The process of developing Independent Living and Transition Plans
- Roles and responsibilities of the participants and documentation in TFACTS
- Procedures for establishing Extension of Foster Care Services
- Extension of Foster Care file maintenance
- Maintenance of Health Insurance
- Includes IL Forms

# “Identifying and Accessing IL Services Manual”

- IL Eligibility & Service Record
- Life Skills Assessment
- IL Wraparound Funding
- Placement Support
- Independent Living Allowance
- DCS Scholarships (ETV & Bright Futures)
- Case Management Services
- Forms

# IL and Transition Planning Guides (3)

Step by Step Examples of entering IL and Transition Plans into TFACTS

1. IL Plan For Custodial Youth 14-16
2. Transition Plan for Custodial Youth 17+
3. Transition Plan For Extension of Foster Care Services

# Consider this:

- Can you think of a young person you worked with in the past who could have benefited from Extension of Foster Care Services to 21?
- How might this have changed their life?

# Consider this:

## Advice from young people:

- Get to know me as a person
- Show me that you care
- Communicate with me
- Be professional
- Be honest and reliable
- Help me to be my best

# Review of Learning Objectives

Do you understand...

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6. Where to find more information & support?



**For more  
information, please  
contact your  
Regional  
Independent Living  
Program Specialist**